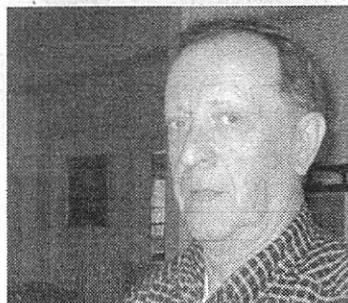


## **The Clipper Visits... Gordon Cushing**

By MARTHA HIMES

Most Duxbury old-timers probably associate the Cushing family with their former garage in Halls Corner, now the Dunkin' Donuts. But Gordon Cushing recalls a few other careers his father had: live-bait goose hunting and rum-running during the Roaring Twenties.

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**Cushing has seen a lot of changes in Duxbury during his 66 years in town.**

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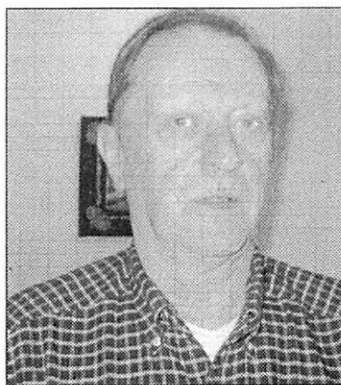
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Cushing's father, Levi G. Cushing, was born in 1902 and died in 1996. Cushing estimates his father must have started the "market gunning" of geese at about age thirteen, in 1915.

"There was a goose stand down at the end of Standish Street on the Pattons' property, out on the beach, and the old-timers called that place Joe's Point," Cushing said. "Al Freeman pretty much ran it. They had a telephone line between the goose stand and our garage in Halls Corner."

In front of the gunning stand were trap-door pens containing live geese. Far out in the ocean sat seven-foot-long decoys, so large they had to be towed out with a motorboat. Closer in to the beach stood smaller, four-foot decoys, and closest to shore sat life-size decoys.

The geese migrated down the coast, cutting overland at the north end of Duxbury Beach, flying south over Standish Shore and the Nook into Kingston Bay. As the geese approached Joe's Point the hunters released the live decoys from their pens to mingle with the migrating geese. The tame geese soon returned to their pens, where they were accustomed to



business of the duck coming in to land on the water and shooting at a duck sitting still. This is all wing shooting, in the air."

In addition to market gunning, during Prohibition Levi also smuggled alcohol into Duxbury. Some of the hooch was trucked up to Boston, some down to Providence, and some stayed here.

Levi communicated via ham radio with John Magnus of Manomet, the owner of the schooner "I'm Alone." Magnus sailed his schooner up to Canada to purchase alcohol, then brought his cargo to a rendezvous point three miles off Duxbury's coast.

"My father and others would go out there in these rum speedboats," Cushing said, into which the alcohol was transferred and brought into Duxbury.

The boats Acacia and Mishawaukee, built in 1931,

with the National Guard from 1956-1969 and a firefighting career with the Duxbury Volunteer Fire Department. Cushing joined the fire department in June of 1953, when he was 16 years old.

Cushing remembers when the Chestnut Street fire station was the main fire station and the Bluefish River and Lincoln Street stations were still active (the Grange currently occupies the Lincoln Street station).

Cushing, 66, now works at the Senior Center, as part of a Federal program called Senior Aid. He does a little bit of everything at the Center. "I meet all kinds of people, and it's good because it keeps me active both physically and mentally. I think the secret about this age thing is to stay active," he said.

He has four children, almost all of whom have stayed close to the family's long-time stomping grounds in Halls Corner: Gordon Jr., Duxbury Recreation Director; Gwynne Souza, who teaches music in a Depot Street studio; Matthew, who lives in Bourne; and Marcie Clough, who runs Artica Gallery on Depot St.

being fed. The migrating geese pursued them, only to be greeted by a barrage of gunfire. "It was a slaughter," Cushing said.

The rewards of the hunt were packed into barrels and shipped, via Duxbury's railroad, to Boston as restaurant delicacies. Levi was paid \$5 for each goose and \$5 for each pair of ducks.

"Back in those times, that was big money, because a shotgun shell cost 12 cents," Cushing said.

In addition to live baiting, the Cushings also sank wooden olive oil barrels into the shoreline, in which they would crouch and hunt ducks. Cushing sank his own barrel into Captain's Flat in 1951, when he was 14, and is near certain he was the last man to put a barrel out in Captain's Flat.

Cushing rowed a dory out to his barrel at medium tide. After bailing out his barrel and setting out seaweed-and-fishnet decoys, he sat in his barrel and waited for the ducks. Using this technique, it was possible to shoot a hundred ducks in one tide, as his father did one night.

"Now that is real shooting. That's why that generation of guys got to be such good shots," Cushing recalls. "'Cause that was all wing shooting. There's none of this

were used for rum-running. According to Cushing family legend, the Mishawauke cost over \$20,000—an unimaginable fortune in those times—but "made a lot of money," presumably an even greater fortune.

Cushing does not know who owned the Acacia or the Mishawauke. "There were many men here in Duxbury who were involved in this rum-running," he said.

The end of Prohibition in 1933 and Levi's cessation of market gunning in 1936 left the family with only their garage to support them for the remainder of the Depression. However, said Cushing, "they made a considerable amount of money during the rum-running years."

The garage began as a livery stable in Halls Corner, owned by Cushing's great-grandfather, also named Levi. As horses went the way of candlelight and fireplace cooking, Cushing's uncles Earl and Paul obtained a Cadillac dealership in 1911. In 1921, Cushing's grandfather Harry, a cement block mason, built the existing garage building (now Dunkin' Donuts) in 1921. The garage closed in 1974.

Cushing worked at the garage throughout his life, in addition to a military career